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Important  
Information  
for  
Parents  
with  
Children  
in

**DAY  
CARE  
CENTERS**

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Day care centers increasingly are recognized to be important in the transmission of communicable diseases, especially centers where infants and toddlers are in attendance. The grouping of small children, who by nature have poorly developed hygienic practices, creates an environment for the transfer of diarrheal, respiratory, and less frequently, neurologic diseases caused by a variety of bacteria, viruses and parasites.

A systematic approach is necessary to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission. This approach includes good environmental sanitation, frequent hand-washing, exclusion of symptomatic children and prompt reporting of communicable disease cases.

In order to recognize and effectively react to communicable disease problems as soon as possible, the following procedures are recommended to make the situation easier when illness occurs.

## **Preventive Measures**

**A** Provide important information to your center director when you register your child for day care, such as:

- where child's parents can be reached during the day;
- your family physician and hospital of choice; and
- person to contact in an emergency in case you can't be reached. (This could be the person you have selected as alternative caregiver - a relative, neighbor, friend or other dependable adult.)

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- B** Make provisions for alternative day care when your child is sick.

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If you work during the day, find out your employer's sick leave policies.

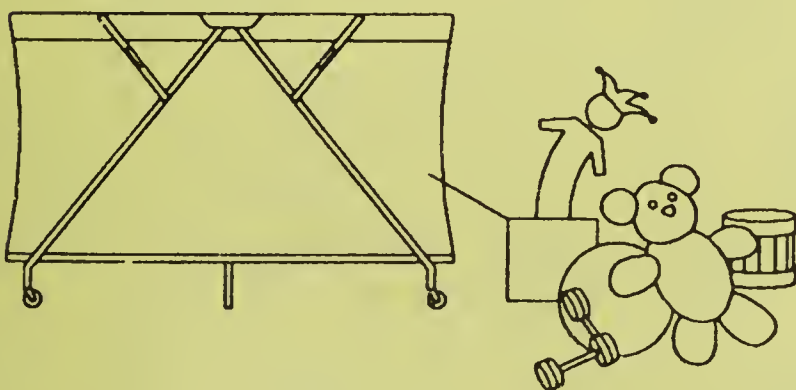
If you will be unable to take time away from work, find someone on whom you can depend to care for your child when he or she is ill.

- C** Be sure your child has all required immunizations on schedule and bring a current record of these immunizations to the center.

## Measures to Take When a Disease Occurs

- A** Inform your center director if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease so the staff of the center can be especially alert about his/her hand-washing and other appropriate preventive measures. In certain cases the center may want to take special measures to prevent your child and the others from developing the disease.

Here is a *partial* list of communicable diseases occurring in children attending day care centers. Some are common; all can be dangerous. For a complete list of all reportable diseases or conditions, contact your day care center administrator or local health department.





- Meningitis
- Chickenpox
- Diarrheal diseases (Shigella, Campylobacter, Salmonella, Giardia, Amebiasis)
- Hepatitis A
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping cough)
- Pneumonia
- Rubella (German Measles)

**B** Keep your child at home if he/she develops fever, diarrhea and/or vomiting, as these symptoms may endanger the health of the other children.

**NOTE:** We know it isn't practical or realistic to expect parents to keep children home every time they have a runny nose. But with *some* symptoms, a child may endanger his own health and the health of the other children and staff by being at the center when he/she is sick.

You may also want to consult a physician especially if the child is sick three or more days. Take the child back to the day care center only when he/she has recovered.

**C** If your child is *diagnosed* as having a contagious disease such as those in the above list, report the disease to the day care center personnel, so preventive measures within the facility, if necessary, can be taken.

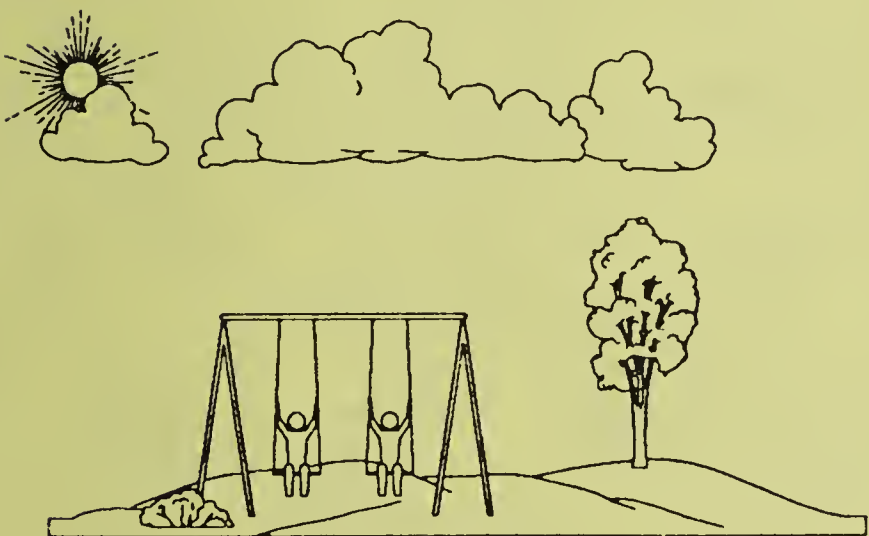
Follow the advice of the child's health care provider before bringing the child back to the day care center.

## Other Helpful Measure for Parents

**A** Diapered children in day care centers should be sent to the center with clothing to cover their diapers. This will prevent the children from placing their hands in the diaper where the hands may become contaminated. Garments such as bib overalls, which button at the sides, are good choices.

**B** Teach your children how to properly wash their hands with soap and water. Children also should be instructed that hands should *always* be washed after each trip to the toilet and before eating meals and snacks.

If you have more questions, you should contact your family doctor or your local health department.



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Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Infectious Diseases  
525 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Illinois Department of Children  
and Family Services  
400 East Monroe  
Springfield, Illinois 62701